(c) As intimated by BALCO, the Company has 5266 regular employees as on 1.2.2008, out of which, 3582 are from the State of Chhattisgarh.

(d) After disinvestment and transfer of management control of BALCO in favour of a Strategic Partner (SP) on 2nd March, 2001, the appointment of requisite personnel in the Company comes within the purview of the SP. BALCO has informed that since disinvestment, BALCO has been giving preference to employment of candidates domiciled in the State on Chhattisgarh and to the wards of its employees. Besides, the Company also ensures that the contractors engaged by BALCO employ workers domiciled in the State of Chhattisgarh. BALCO has also intimated that it is ensuring that all terms and conditions contained in the environmental approvals are complied with.

Establishment of Equal Opportunity Commission

1006. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is going establish an Equal Opportunity Commission;

(b) if so, what would be the mandate of this Commission and what kind of activities would be performed by this Commision, and by when it is likely to be constituted;

(c) whether Government has decided about any deprivation index, to find out the kind of people who are deprived lot in the country;

(d) whether any expert committee has submitted any report in this regard;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) whether Sachar Committee's recommendations were also taken into consideration and if so, the details in that regard?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A. R. ANTULAY): (a) to (f) The Sachar Committee had recommended that an Equal Opportunity Commission should be constituted to look into the grievances of deprived groups. An Expert Group was set up in August, 2007 to examine the structure and functions of such a commission. It is scheduled to submit its report shortly.

Education and loan facilities to minorities and backward communities

1007. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has evolved a strategy to ensure better education and loan facilities to minority and backwards communities in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the basis on which Government has distinguished between minority and backward community status; and

(d) the achievements made, so far by Government in this regards?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A. R. ANTULAY): (a), (b) and (d) A statement, regarding the decision taken on the recommendations of the Sachar Committee, has been laid on the Table of the House on 31.8.2007 which contains details of the